

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ARAE-00 /013 W
----- 108141 /65
P 231600Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0144

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FOR ARA/PAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PN
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON PANAMA

REF: STATE 207184

1. EMBASSY CONCURS IN GENERAL WITH TEXT OF PAPER ON PANAMA. HOWEVER, UNDER SECTION III, ARTICLES 3 AND 9, REFERRING TO THE MOST RECENT OPPONENTS EXILED BY GOP, THOSE INDIVIDUALS EXILED AFTER SEPTEMBER 1976 DISTURBANCES SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED. THERE MAY BE SOME QUESTION AS TO THE EXILE STATUS OF MRS. QUERUBE CARLES, SINCE SHE WAS COINCIDENTLY GRANTED AN IMMIGRANT VISA TO THE U.S. AT THE TIME OF HER DEPARTURE FROM PANAMA. HOWEVER, CARLOS GONZALEZ DE LA LASTRA, EUSEBIO RAMON MARCHOSKY AND HUMBERTO LOPEZ TIRONES DEFINITELY BELONG IN THE EXILE CATEGORY.

2. IN REGARD TO THE RETURN OF EXILES, WE THINK SECTION III ARTICLE O, LINES 8 AND 9 SHOULD READ: "SOME EXILED PERSONS HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO RETURN TO PANAMA AFTER A TIME."

3. REGARDING ARTICLE 5, SUGGEST FINAL SENTENCE BE REVISED AS FOLLOWS: "WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE INDEPENDENT CORROBORATION OF THE ALLEGATIONS, OUR RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT NEARLY ALL
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OF THE ALLEGED INCIDENTS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE OCCURRED DURING THE 1968-71 PERIOD."

4. FINALLY WE THINK THAT THE REMARKS CONCERNING CONSTRAINTS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION (PART B OF SAME SECTION) ARE UNDERSTATED SOMEWHAT. GOP CAN AND DOES EXERCISE ITS ABILITY

TO INFLUENCE MASS MEDIA, PARTICULARLY THE FOUR EDITORS
RENOVACION NEWSPAPERS, BY TELLING THE EDITORS WHAT STORIES
TO PUBLISH, EMPHASIZE OR SUPPRESS. THE
STATEMENT "AT VARIOUS TIMES, HOWEVER, THE MEDIA HAVE INCLUDED
SHARP AND SERIOUS CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT ACTION"
IS TOO BROAD. IN MEDIA CRITICISM OF THE GOP IN THE LAST
YEAR, RADIO COMMENTARY HAS ONLY OCCASIONALLY BEEN SHARP
AND SERIOUS. THE ONLY BITING CRITICISM APPEARING IN THE
PRESS IS DIRECTED AT LOW-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND IS
AIMED PRIMARILY AT FAILURES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOP
POLICIES. CRITICISMS OF SPECIFIC POLICIES, INsofar AS
THEY OCCUR, ARE CIRCUMSPECT AND USUALLY INDIRECT.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, EXPULSION, IMMIGRANT VISAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PANAMA08650
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760471-0307
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761217/aaaaaodw.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 207184
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 JUL 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <29 OCT 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON PANAMA
TAGS: PFOR, PN, US, (CARLES, QUERUBE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006